



STATE SENATOR
BRUCE PATTERSON
IN THE LOOP ★

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03/03/06

→ PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO A FRIEND!

**** Sen. Patterson hosts another Education meeting in District ****

On Wednesday, March 8, Sen. Patterson will host Chairman Wayne Kuipers of the Senate Education Committee, and Sen. Ron Jelinek, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for K – 12 Education, at a special public hearing in Flat Rock. The evening's focus will be education and school finance issues.

The meeting will open at 7:30pm, at the Flat Rock Community Center, One Maguire St. District residents including parents and students, teachers, school board members, superintendents, will address the Committee. You are welcome to address the Committee also. Please contact Mr. Chris Gillett at (517) 373-7350.

More than 200 attended the Brownstown meeting on Feb. 27. This will be the third in a series of education meetings in the Seventh District, as Sen. Patterson promised.

Rockwood Senior Luncheon

Sen. Patterson will host a complimentary pasta luncheon for Seniors in Rockwood, on Monday, March 13, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, at the Rockwood Community Center, 32001 Fort Street, Rockwood, between Huron River Drive and Gibraltar. Please call Amy, at (734) 379-5600, to RSVP.

Sen. Patterson will also speak on issues of concern to seniors.

Public Hearing on Water Discharge, March 30

The Michigan Legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) (Senator Mike Bishop, Chairman) has issued a Public Hearing Notice and Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) from the Department of Environmental Quality--Water Bureau--Part 21. Wastewater Discharge Protection Permits (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) (2004-055 EQ).

The public hearing is scheduled for March 30, 2006. It will be held at 10:00 a.m. in Constitution Hall, 525 West Allegan Street, Lansing, 48933.

The public hearing notice information and the Regulatory Impact Statement is on the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (SOAHR) website. Use the link <http://www.state.mi.us/orr/emi/rules.asp?type=dept&id=EQ> then, scroll down to 2004-055 EQ, and select the History and RIS buttons.

Patterson's SB 851 Groundwater Protection Bill signed

On February 28, Governor Granholm formally signed SB 851 as Public Act 34 of 2006. "We saw a great consensus emerge," said Sen. Patterson, "water users and conservation advocates, farming, industry, and a bi-partisan unity for the sake of our groundwater future. My bill gave new duties to the Groundwater Advisory Council, a scientific body, to keep future legislators up-to-date on the needs they must address. In an era of term limits, this is essential if they are to protect our environment, and all who depend on our groundwater." The signing took place at the Michigan Historical Museum, in Lansing.



Governor Granholm and Senator Patterson hold the signed copy of his bill.

"I thank Sen. Patty Birkholz for conducting hearings all over the state, including Northville, and guiding a package of related bills through the legislature," said Patterson.

Humbug Marsh gets restoration grant

The Department of Environmental Quality announced Thursday a grant of \$333,743 to aid in protection of the embattled Humbug Marsh in Gibraltar/Trenton. The grant will pay to remove a culvert in the main stream feeding the marsh and build a stormwater retention pond to help keep pollutants out of the Detroit River. The pond and the marsh itself will act as natural pollution filters.

Humbug Marsh Complex is made up of Humbug Island, Humbug Marsh, and adjacent undeveloped upland habitats. It includes 410 acres of unique fish and wildlife habitats in Gibraltar and Trenton. Humbug Marsh includes the last mile of natural shoreline on the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River. Over 97% of the coastal wetlands on the river have been covered by shoreline development and nearly all the coastal wetlands in western Lake Erie have disappeared during the past 50 years. Since it is home to such a high diversity of fish and wildlife, the marsh has been identified as globally unique and significant in biological diversity - nothing like this marsh exists anywhere outside the Great Lakes. The property was acquired by the Trust for Public Land last fall as part of a bankruptcy proceeding involving a local development company, Made in Detroit.

Patterson bill will correct glitch in the MI Ed. Savings Program

Legislation currently in committee will provide more money for families' college funds by deleting a glitch in the Michigan Education Savings Program (MESP). The MESP was set up to spur savings for college expenses. It provides a state tax break, in addition to federal tax benefits, for contributions to a child's college account. An unintended flaw is that the program reduces or eliminates the MESP's tax benefit on annual contributions once the first child in a family enters college; withdrawals from the oldest child's account are subtracted from contributions to younger siblings' accounts. Financial planner Steve Braun of Canton brought this to Sen. Patterson's attention, after failing to get action from the Treasury Dept. Sen. Patterson saw the need for this correction at once. The glitch hit heaviest on struggling families who wished to save college money for several children.

SB 1048 will restore the tax incentive for everyone. When a family's oldest child starts college, the parents will still receive full benefits of the tax break on contributions to their younger children's accounts.

Cell Phone Privacy Bill passes Senate

Senate Bill 127 passed the senate yesterday. It prohibits publishers of cell phone directories from printing your cell phone number without your explicit written or electronic consent. Furthermore, you cannot be charged for choosing this option. The bill came out of Sen. Patterson's Committee on Technology & Energy recently with full recommendation. The bill now goes to the House.

Major mobile-phone service providers have discussed creating a directory of the more than 180 million cell-phone users nation-wide. Consumers have worried about such a directory; they don't want their numbers published and possibly used for telemarketing. Unwittingly, some mobile-phone users have consented to have their numbers included in a directory because their contracts include fine print that allows publish their number.

Comcast Newsmakers: Patterson interviewed on Long-Range Energy

Sen. Patterson's interview will be shown on CNN Headline News in the Lansing and Jackson viewing areas during the week of March 13-March 19, three times a day at 54 minutes after the hour.

The Southfield Comcast production team will schedule his interview to air in the Wayne County area shortly.

In the meantime, go to Sen. Patterson's webpage, < www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson >, scroll to the lower right corner, and find the video link there on-line. It runs five minutes.

Patterson proposes law to increase alternative energy production

Legislation that can revitalize Michigan's agriculture industry and make renewable fuels widely available was introduced in the Michigan Senate this week. Senator Patterson's SB 1078 will create 10 new 'renaissance zones' in Michigan to be used specifically for manufacturing alternative energy. This will increase the supply of E85, an 85 percent blend of ethanol, for Michigan business and industry. Ethanol is a clean-burning, high-octane fuel produced primarily from corn kernels. Other legislation in the package focuses on B5, a 5 percent blend of biodiesel. Biodiesel is a cleaner-burning diesel fuel made from natural renewable sources, such as soybean oil.

In addition to creating renaissance zones, the package of bills

- Provides tax incentives for consumers by cutting the end cost of renewable fuels;
- Gives gas stations an opportunity to receive a grant of up to 50% of the total cost for converting an existing gas station to be E85 or B5 fuel efficient;
- Offers a grant for 50% of the total cost for the construction of a new E85 pump, which could be up to \$15,000 per facility; and
- Requires the Department of Agriculture to test diesel fuels to ensure Michigan residents are receiving the best quality fuels.

Job development legislation introduced

Following an announcement that Michigan had lost another opportunity, to become home to a major food distribution center, legislation was reintroduced to help Michigan communities compete with neighboring states.

Earlier this week, SYSCO Corp., a Fortune 100 company, chose to locate in Indiana rather than the village of Constantine in southwestern Michigan. Unfortunately, Constantine like other Michigan communities, found itself at a competitive disadvantage with its neighbors to the south when it began attempts to lure SYSCO. The company's \$80 million facility will create nearly 500 jobs in Indiana.

Vetoed by Gov. Granholm, the original bill would have helped make Michigan competitive with other states in the Great Lakes Basin. Indiana, Ohio and Illinois already allow local units of government to extend property tax abatements to help attract or retain large-scale warehousing and distribution centers.

Governor signs law giving new tool to protect children, neighborhood

Governor Granholm signed Act 46 of 2006 to give Michigan citizens with a new tool to help them protect both themselves and their children from potential sexual predators. The law lets people sign up for email notification when a registered sex offender moves into their zip code.

This bill was considered favorably when it came to the Judiciary Committee, on which Sen. Patterson is the senior attorney.

Public Act 46 requires the Michigan State Police (MSP) to create a subscriber system to provide electronic notification, via email, whenever a registered sex offender moves into the designated zip code. Interested citizens will need to register for this service once the law takes effect.

Currently, information on the state's sex offender registry is available to the public and searchable by zip code, but a person must either go to the MSP web page or visit their local law enforcement agency to receive information about registered offenders living nearby. In order to ensure they have current information, a person must check either the web page or local law enforcement office regularly.

SB 128 was authored by Senator Alan Sanborn (R-Richmond Township), and co-sponsored by Sen. Patterson. It takes effect on January 1, 2007.

Meaningful water protection package becomes law

Groundbreaking, comprehensive legislation to protect Michigan's waters was signed into law this week. The state's water supply will be protected now and for succeeding generations. The law will conserve and safeguard the Great Lakes and the state's other water resources. Senate Bills 850-852, 854 and 857 create new standards for water withdrawals and permit-programs for water users to help avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

The package will strengthen a current prohibition against water diversion by requiring legislative oversight; put in place a system to manage significant new water withdrawals that have a potential to impact our water and water-dependent natural resources; implement an interim standard that will provide protections for key designated trout streams by defining critical zones around the streams; develop an easy-to-use model to replace the interim standard that will allow a user to click on a map and determine if water use will cause an adverse impact; establish a permitting program for water bottling operations; authorize the creation of groups of water users to work with the DEQ in crafting water plans that resolve water use problems before adverse impacts occur; and require businesses that use our water to propose water use conservation measures.

Office Hours schedule for March, 2006

On **Tuesdays** of each week, Sue Trussell, Sen. Patterson's District Representative, will hold office hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm at the following places:

- March 7th Sumpter Township Hall, 23480 Sumpter Road, Belleville, between Willis & Willow Roads.
- March 14th Woodhaven City Hall, 21869 West Road, Woodhaven
- March 21st Huron Township Hall
- March 28th Flat Rock Library
(includes Rockwood constituents)

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov >. You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!